



GROUP NEWS

National Archaeology Day

The Group's Artefacts Day was duly delivered in the Market Hall on the afternoon of Sunday 20th July. I think we can congratulate ourselves on a great success.

Things weren't looking so good earlier in the month. The grant-aid body on whom we were initially relying for funds to pay for the hire of the hall and the insurance wrote to say "sorry, but we don't consider claims for less than £3000". They went on to suggest ways in which we could increase the bill, but it was clear that we were wasting our time. Furthermore Carlisle Museum who we had hoped would provide a display told us they were committed elsewhere that day (well, it was National Archaeology Day) and Harry had picked up a rumour that David Shotter, our main "Expert" might also have double-booked himself.

Nevertheless, the organising team were quite determined that an Artefacts Day would occur as originally planned - we'd started so we would finish!. Phyllis decided that we should have a large display explaining just what archaeology was all about and illustrate this with pictures of the Group in action. Even better she had contacts at Appleby Grammar School who could loan us some large display boards. Stanley was deputed to prepare a presentation on the Viking Crosses of the Eden Valley as we thought these would make a striking display. Harry ransacked his archives and came up with all sorts of posters and maps. The author was left to his own devices to construct a "finds pit" out of old floorboards and populate it with "something interesting and child-friendly". To be honest, though, there

were one or two of us who were beginning to feel that this wasn't perhaps such a great idea after all.

On the great day itself, however, we assembled the fruits of our labours in the Market Hall - and it looked terrific. Along the way we had roped in Malcolm Ridley to bring along his collection of pottery and coins and Tricia to provide a display of environmental archaeological stuff. Martin Railton had provided a continuous slide show of local sites. And goodness, even the experts had turned up. Dr Shotter had obviously disentangled his diary in our favour and we also had Dr Chapman of Penrith Museum, complete with a judicious selection from the museum's more spectacular material.

So that was six members of the Society, two eager Experts and a rather impressive set of displays. Would any members of the public turn up as well? We'd put posters up in every village within a five mile radius, advertised in the Herald, Radio Cumbria and the Appleby Parish News but of course it was a dozy Sunday afternoon in Appleby with both a Grand Prix and the Open on the telly. Two o'clock came, the doors opened, and there they were - customers! Even more amazingly, they bore "finds".

The first was a large metal ring-like object from a gas-main trench in Keswick. This was tentatively held to be the pommel from a Roman sword. The next was a fossilized tree fern from Crosby Garret! And so it went on through mysterious disks and a whole series of treasures unearthed by the kids digging in the "finds pit" in the corner. Modesty has dissuaded me from mentioning the details of this so far, but alright, if you insist - a large sand pit full of chopped up tree trimmings concealing a Roman mosaic in one corner, a Victorian bottle-dump in another and, to add macabre interest, a

Neolithic ritual burial (ie a sheep's skull under a rock) in a third. Needless to say, the "dinosaur" proved to be the highlight of the day for our youngest customers.

We packed up at five, very happy with what we'd achieved. We'd certainly raised the profile of the Group as an active society and had a lot of fun into the bargain. Stanley now also knows rather more than he cares to about Viking crosses. Oh and Upper Eden Neighbourhood Forum kindly came up with an emergency stop-gap grant for us, so we're not bankrupt either. Full marks and many thanks to them for recognizing a worthy cause when they see it.

Martin Joyce

Survey at Kirkland

We had three survey days this year - if we had known it was going to be the driest, warmest for years we might have spent much more time there! We picked up a number of stone fast banks and possible clearance cairns in the main survey area. A pattern is emerging of possible circular enclosures and areas of field clearance which looks as if it could be a proto-field system. It is crossed by two trackways which pre-date the existing track to Garrigil - one pre-dates the 1856 enclosure wall. Outside the main survey area, a stone-fast revetment with an associated dry pond has been noted on the Kirkland Beck - this may be associated an early the water supply to Kirkland. A narrow hollow way leading from the ford and onto Bank Moor has also been noted although it might have been a drainage ditch - the enclosure wall runs over it. The triangle of ground between the modern track and the Cocklock Beck is scarred with hollow ways marking the line of earlier trackways to Garrigill.

Harry Hawkins

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VIKING SETTLEMENT IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

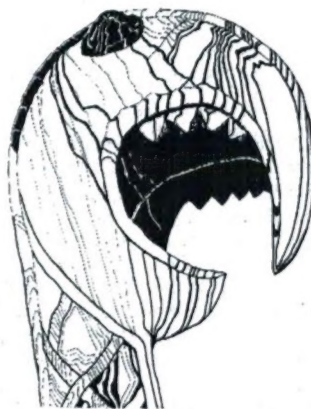
Members of Appleby Archaeology Group and a number of visitors enjoyed a fascinating talk on the evidence for Viking Settlements in the Lake District. Steve Dickinson, an archaeologist who has worked in Cumbria for over 20 years, talked of his work in the Kentmere Valley in the 1980s and a proposed project at Urswick.

In introduction he spoke of the evidence of Viking incursions into the Lake District including signs of military activity citing, as examples, spearheads found at Kentmere and a grave at Hesketh in the Forest where a broken sword was found. Other evidence is found in the Scandinavian sculpture seen on many crosses in the county, an exceptional one being the Gosforth Cross and on hogback tombstones, examples of which can be seen at Penrith and Appleby. The prevalence of place names, particularly in the central lakes and suggestions of looting, such as the Ormside bowl found in a Viking tomb, are further evidence of a Viking presence.

Steve then explained that there was little to indicate where the Vikings had settled in Lakeland and that clues to help identify settlements could be found by studying the Viking villages at the Brough of Birsay on Orkney and at Jarsholm on Shetland. It is difficult to find evidence linking particular sites to the Vikings and one of the reasons, he suggested, is that the same sites have been used by others both before and after the times they were likely to have been occupied by the Vikings.

He then described Cumbria after the Romans left, in the early historical period often spoken of as the dark ages, and emphasised the continuity, reuse and development of sites. Small but significant fortlets, often on rocky outcrops or tors, such as one that overlooks Mardale, are found. Those who built them may have drawn inspiration

from Roman sites. In the hills the remains of stone huts or shielings have been found and the footings of some found in Ennerdale suggest a Scandinavian influence. The shielings do not appear to have associated contemporary field systems and some seem to have continued in use to Medieval times. The early Christian church had a significant presence in Cumbria at the time and monastic sites were vulnerable to attack from the Vikings and where these sites are known archaeologists may, in time, find physical evidence of such attacks.



He then discussed some of the findings from an excavation at Bryant's Gill in the Kentmere Valley, an area rich in names of Scandinavian origin such as "scales", an upland hut, "gill" and "beck". The Gill is an upland site, set in the middle of a prehistoric landscape where a number of flint artefacts have been found. The site been intensively analysed and its appearance is similar to upland sites of the same era found in Norway. 500 square meters of turf were removed to expose wall footings, a building 10 meters by 5 was identified with entrances at either end, and post holes and internal paving were evident. Charcoal and burnt stone were found and carbon dating

provided two dates, 760-800AD and 800-975AD. It is likely that it was first a platform site with a timber hut which was later dismantled and rebuilt in stone. Artefacts found included a cornelian gem stone, iron slag from metal work, honestones and spindle-whorls which had been lathe turned and were made from shale. The Kentmere Valley appears to have all that Scandinavian settlers would have wanted and although there is no hard and fast evidence it may be that the sites of medieval farms indicate the location of the larger Viking farms.

In conclusion Steve spoke of the reasons for a proposed project at Urswick on the Furness peninsula. The Furness area was rich in iron and as there are Scandinavian bloomery sites in the vicinity we know the Vikings were interested in the iron and it may be that settlement sites will be found in the area. In 1907 an Anglo Scandinavian cross fragment of the 9th-10th century was found in the medieval church of St Mary and St Michael at Little Urswick and in 1911 a stone was discovered with a runic inscription which links the site to St Columba. Nearby there is a Roman military site and in the vicinity of the church there are the remains of inner and outer boundaries. It is hoped, funding permitting, to do a geophysical study around the church to try and find more of the site's links with the Romans, the early Christian church and the possible sacking of it by the Vikings.

The talk left the group intrigued and keen to be kept informed of further finds and Steve Dickinson agreed to come back to talk to us next year.

Phyllis Rouston



ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SETTLE TO CARLISLE RAILWAY

The Appleby Archaeology group enjoyed an imaginary journey along the Settle to Carlisle line when Peter Robinson spoke about the building of the railway, highlighting the engineering work, the archaeological evidence and the social conditions of the navies.

After some political wrangling the Midland Railway began construction of the railway in November 1870. There were four main contractors working on the 72 miles of track and Mr Robinson concentrated on Contract 1, awarded to John Ashwell, for the Settle to Dent section. The contractors had little concept of the terrain and potential weather conditions, factors which delayed and increased the cost of construction. The line was finally opened to passengers in 1876, when it was advertised as the most scenic and comfortable route on which to travel north.

Slides of plans, many drawn on site, and of photographs of the construction in progress demonstrated the enormity of the venture. The ascending gradient is 1:100 and tramways had to be built to bring building materials and coal to power the machinery to the construction sites. Evidence of track ways, brick works, limekilns and some of the quarries from which the limestone was extracted can be seen in the landscape today.

Two of the major constructions between Settle and Dent are the Ribbleshead viaduct and the Blea Moor tunnel. The piers of the viaduct were sunk deep in Batty Moss and wooden scaffolding erected to enable the building of the 24 limestone arches which span a length 440 yards. Blea Moor tunnel is the longest on the line and several shafts were sunk and winding gear installed to remove the soil and rock and to lower the supplies of brick and mortar needed to line the tunnel. On the moor the top of the ventilation shafts, circular brick structures, can



be seen and beside the old tramways piles of debris from the tunneling and remains of the shaft sites, some showing traces of the winding gear, are visible

Encampments, with names such as Jericho, Sebastopol and Batty Wife Hole, were built between Ribbleshead and Dent to house the workforce of about 2000. These shanty towns were built, lived in and dismantled in a seven year period and yet today remains of the buildings can be picked out from aerial photographs and from the ground. A hut provided accommodation for a family who acted as landlords and several lodgers, 16 was the highest number that Mr Robinson had noted. There is evidence of other buildings such as saddlers, a brewery and a hospital. Tradesmen from Sedburg and Ingleton supplied the shops in the encampments, doctors visited and the contractors set up a school at Ribbleshead and approved a Bible reader for the navvies.

The census for 1871, parish registers, newspaper articles and old photographs have provided insight into the lives and deaths of those working on the railway.

The census, contrary to common belief, shows that the majority of navies came from the south west and only a very small proportion from Ireland. A burial register from Chapel-le-Dale show a high death rate from disease especially in the children.

Mr Robinson concluded by outlining the history of the line since 1876 and it was good to learn that the line now carries many more passengers and freight than it did 20 years ago, perhaps the best tribute to those who designed and built the railway in the 19th century.

Mr Robinson answered a number of questions before being thanked by Harry for a most interesting talk.

Phyllis Rouston

NOTES

Transactions 2003

The 2003 volume of the Transactions of the CWAAS has two articles of local interest: Later Prehistoric Settlement in Matterdale and Hutton parishes: recent survey results by Andrew W Hoan and Helen L Loney; and Appleby Goal, Onion Flatt (Waitby) and Robert Fothergill (1693-1779) by Blake Tyson. In the NOTES there is a piece on astronomical alignments at Long Meg and Castlerigg, Roman coins from Low Borrow Bridge and an Anglo-Saxon strap end from Shap (copies in local libraries).

Harry Hawkins

WINTER PROGRAMME

2004 AGM and Members Evening

7.00 Tue 13th January
Appleby Market Hall
Supper Room

Our annual general meeting will be held slightly earlier than usual at 7.00pm. Minutes of the last AGM are included with this newsletter. Please have a read through them before the meeting. Please also bring any questions that you have regarding the group or topics for discussion.

The AGM will be followed at 7.30 pm by two short talks by members of the group. These will be on Craketrees medieval house and Hartsop Hall Lead Mine.



SUBSCRIPTIONS 2004

Note that subscriptions for 2004 become due in January. Please complete the payment slip enclosed with this newsletter and post to the Treasurer, Tricia Crompton. Alternatively approach Tricia at the AGM.

Behind the Scenes at PENRITH MUSEUM

7.45 Tue 10th February
Penrith Museum, Penrith

This visit will provide the opportunity to see behind the displays at Penrith museum and view objects from their collection. Meet in the foyer of the museum (at the Tourist Information desk). Alternatively, to car share, meet in Appleby by the Moot Hall at 7.15pm. For further details contact Harry Hawkins on 01768 864340.

COLONSAY A History Revealed

7.30 Tue 11th March
Appleby Market Hall
Supper Room

Janet Niepokojezycka will be talking about the archaeology of Colonsay situated off the West coast of Scotland. The island has many historical ruins and ecclesiastical relics. Artefacts also indicate prehistoric occupation on the island dating back to the Mesolithic.

Note of Thanks

The committee would like to acknowledge the help of Cumbria County Council in meeting the costs of the Artefacts day in July. A grant of £150 was received from the Upper Eden Neighbourhood Forum to cover the costs of hosting this event for which we are very grateful.



SENDER:

MARTIN RAILTON (EDITOR), PEAR TREE COTTAGE, KIRKLAND ROAD, SKIRWITH,
PENRITH, CUMBRIA, CA10 1RL Email: martin@fellside-eden.freereserve.co.uk